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### **MEPs vote for easier switching for consumers and more single market benefits in telecom reform**

Today MEPs from the internal market and consumer protection committee cleared a first hurdle to reform the EU's telecom market. It upgrades consumer protections of EU citizens when using digital communications tools.

Important changes that MEPs want to see to enhance consumer protections include:

- Consumers should face lower costs when calling their friends and family abroad. Following the abolition of roaming fees earlier this year, unjustified price differences between domestic and international calls within the EU should now also disappear. Currently, consumers pay high prices when calling and texting someone abroad as compared to domestic calls – actual costs for providers do not justify these big price differences.<sup>1</sup>
- Consumers should be able to terminate their contracts early without being penalised for wanting to opt for a better competitor.
- Subscribers to bundled services – contracts combining several services e.g. digital TV, internet and telephony – should be able to rescind parts of their bundle more easily. This change should stop bogging consumers down in lengthy contracts.

Unfortunately, MEPs have decided to restrict the possibility for Member States to maintain existing or introduce better consumer protection in the future than what is stipulated in the new rules in many areas. This could have negative consequences for consumers in some countries and can impede national regulators from reacting swiftly to future problems when they arise.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), commented:

"Bringing down roaming charges was a good first step; the full deal will be bridging the price gap between national and international calls. MEPs paved the way to stop an unnecessary consumer nuisance and create a real single market.

"Surveys consistently show consumers care a big deal about telecom services but many are dissatisfied.<sup>2</sup> It is essential consumers are properly protected when things go wrong or have the chance to quickly switch to a better deal."

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<sup>1</sup> BEUC blog: <http://www.beuc.eu/blog/roaming-done-international-calls-next/> and factsheet: [http://www.beuc.eu/publications/beuc-x-2017-007\\_international\\_calls.pdf](http://www.beuc.eu/publications/beuc-x-2017-007_international_calls.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer\\_evidence/consumer\\_scoreboards/12\\_edition/docs/factsheet\\_consumer\\_markets\\_scoreboard\\_2016\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_evidence/consumer_scoreboards/12_edition/docs/factsheet_consumer_markets_scoreboard_2016_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> The internal market and consumer protection committee shares competence with the European Parliament's industry, research and energy committee which will vote next week. EU ministers are expected to finalise their position in the upcoming months.